



Daily Highlights

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W E D N E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- * Secretary-General presents proposed programme budget for 1996-1997 to Administrative and Budgetary Committee; warns financial crisis threatens very viability of United Nations.
- * UNPREDEP shows what timely deployment of peace-keepers with clear mandate can achieve, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia tells General Assembly.
- * Secretary-General recommends Security Council maintain UNIKOM, citing Mission's contribution to calm on Iraq-Kuwait border.
- * United Nations issues inter-agency appeal for \$110 million for humanitarian assistance to Liberia through August 1996.
- * High Commissioner for Human Rights tells Croatia prompt return of refugees in safety and dignity is matter of highest priority.
- * United Nations reports alarming deterioration in humanitarian situation in Iraq over last six months.
- * United Nations helps Rwanda construct three new detention centres, raising country's official prison capacity to 23,500.
- * UNPROFOR protests after Bosnian Government forces fire heavy weapons in violation of Sarajevo exclusion zone.
- * Economic and Financial Committee adopts programme of work and begins general debate on world economic situation.
- * United States to host two-week intergovernmental conference on threats to global marine environment.
- * DPI publishes blue book on United Nations involvement in human rights from 1945 to 1995.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today presented his programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 to the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary). He proposed a regular budget of \$2.51 billion, before adjustments for such factors as inflation and currency fluctuations. The proposal was \$109 million -- 4.2 per cent -- less than the revised 1994-1995 appropriation. After adjustments, the proposed budget would stand at \$2.69 billion.

The Secretary-General said he had sought to achieve the maximum level of efficiency gains without a negative impact on the fulfilment of mandates. The proposed budget called for the abolition of 201 posts and the creation of 66 posts for new activities mandated by Member States. Special attention had been paid to strengthening the Organization's capacity with regard to political and peace-keeping activities, cooperation for development, support for human rights and humanitarian activities. Internal oversight capacity had also been increased. He emphasized his commitment to ensuring cost-effectiveness, enhancing administrative efficiency, strengthening accountability and eliminating waste.

Focusing on the current financial crisis, the Secretary-General noted that outstanding contributions to the regular budget amounted to almost \$850 million, while those to peace-keeping amounted to \$2.7 billion. The regular budget had run out of cash in August, and \$123 million had been borrowed from peace-keeping to cover expenditures through September. He stressed that cost-saving measures could not substitute for full payment of assessed contributions by Member States, and warned that the very viability of the United Nations might now be at risk.

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The Foreign Minister of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Stevo Crvenkovski, told the General Assembly today that the attempted assassination of President Kiro Gligorov was an attack on his country's independent and peace-loving position. He stressed that the incident would not force the Republic to change course in the pursuit of democracy, reform and the development of good relations with all its neighbours. He urged the United Nations to continue its efforts against terrorism with strong determination.

Foreign Minister Crvenkovski said the accord signed recently by his country and Greece would contribute to stability in the Balkans. It illustrated the positive role of the United Nations in pursuing peaceful solutions in relations between States, based on the principles of the Charter. The United Nations Preventive Deployment (UNPREDEP) also contributed tremendously to peace and stability in the region, and showed what could be achieved by a small number of peace-keepers if deployed at the right time with a clear mandate.

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The Secretary-General has recommended that the Security Council maintain the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM). In a report dated 2 October, he said the Mission contributed significantly to the calm in its area of operation and enjoyed the effective cooperation of the Iraqi and Kuwaiti authorities.

Kuwait contributed two-thirds of the money needed to finance UNIKOM each month, and had paid its contributions for the period ending 31 October, he noted. However, unpaid assessments to the Special Account for the Mission amounted to more than \$37 million.

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The United Nations today issued an inter-agency appeal for \$110 million for assistance to Liberia through August 1996. The nine agencies involved in the appeal identified certain priority areas for action: food security; health; education; repatriation and reintegration of refugees and displaced people; aid to vulnerable groups; demobilization and reintegration of soldiers; and reconstruction of infrastructure.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said it needed \$41 million for the protection and assistance of returnees and displaced persons. There are around 850,000 Liberian refugees in Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. Inside Liberia, 1.3 million people, including large numbers of internally displaced persons, need humanitarian assistance.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Jose Ayala Lasso, has written to Croatian President Franjo Tudjman saying that the prompt return in safety and dignity of all displaced persons, regardless of their national or ethnic origin, is a matter of the highest priority. He expressed deep concern that the wave of arson and looting of houses belonging to Serbs, in circumstances that pointed to the involvement of the Croatian security forces, was continuing.

Mr. Ayala Lasso also expressed concern regarding the discriminatory character of a recent law which effectively gave Croatia control over property "abandoned" by Krajina Serb refugees. The Croatian Government had failed to fulfil its solemn commitment to create conditions conducive to the return of Krajina Serb refugees and thus to guarantee their human and minority rights, he concluded.

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There has been an alarming deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Iraq during the last six months, according to a mid-term report on the United Nations inter-agency humanitarian programme for the country. Conditions are especially bad in the areas of health, nutrition, water and sanitation, and the World Food Programme (WFP) is doubling its caseload to 2.1 million people.

Despite the increased need for assistance, contributions to the humanitarian programme have fallen. Only \$33 million has been pledged or received since 1 April, against estimated priority needs of \$183 million.

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The Special Representative for Rwanda, Shahryar Khan, will tomorrow open three new detention centres built to alleviate overcrowding in the country's prisons. Rwanda currently has 52,000 prisoners, but an official prison capacity of only 12,500. The new centres will almost double that capacity to 23,500.

Construction of the detention centres was coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided logistical support.

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The Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), Lieutenant-General Rupert Smith, met yesterday with the Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Muhamed Sacirbey, to protest a blatant violation of the Sarajevo exclusion zone by Bosnian Government forces. About 100 rounds were fired from heavy weapons inside the zone, apparently in support of an infantry action against Serb positions to the south of the city, near the town of Trnovo. The Foreign Minister indicated that he would look into the matter.

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The Second Committee (Economic and Financial) yesterday adopted its programme of work and elected Max Stadhagen (Nicaragua) and Conor Murphy (Ireland) as its Vice-Chairmen. The Committee Chairman, Goce Petreski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), was elected by the General Assembly on 19 September.

As the Committee began its general debate on the world economic situation, the representative of the Philippines said no amount of institutional reform could strengthen the United Nations role in development

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unless accompanied by sufficient resources. Speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 developing countries and China, he stressed that reforms must be determined by policy objectives and not the other way around.

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The United States is to host a two-week intergovernmental conference on threats to the global marine environment and the well-being of the 3.5 billion people that live in the world's coastal areas. The conference, which will begin in Washington, D.C., on 23 October, is expected to adopt a global programme of action to meet those threats.

Almost 80 per cent of marine pollution and other types of marine degradation is caused by land-based activities, according to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The draft programme of action deals with such problems as waste-water treatment and management, persistent organic pollutants and physical destruction of habitats of marine living resources.

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The Department of Public Information (DPI) has published "The United Nations and Human Rights, 1945-1995", the seventh volume of the blue books series. The book tells the full story of the Organization's efforts to create a culture of human rights worldwide, building on the principles of the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It includes a comprehensive collection of historic United Nations documents.

"The fight for human rights remains, more than ever before, a top priority for the international community," said the Secretary-General in his introduction to the book. "The United Nations must continue to mobilize its efforts, so that human rights may one day emerge at last as the common language of humanity."

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